



Governor Ignores Science and Signs High-Capacity Well Bill The public will have to turn to the courts for meaningful water protection

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MADISON, WI – In signing the 2017 ACT 10 today, Governor Walker creates legislation that further erodes the Department of Natural Resources' authority to apply sound science to the review and approval of high-capacity well applications. Years of scientific studies are in direct conflict with ACT 10 which elevates the wants of special interests above the needs of communities and families.

"Though some legislators may tout this bill as a success, the reality is this law requires our state's science agency to ignore the cumulative impacts of high-capacity wells on our lakes and streams," said Midwest Environmental Advocates Executive Director Kimberlee Wright. "I'm shocked by how obstinate legislators and the Governor have been to the overwhelming public opposition to this bill—opposition based in sound science and real-life impacts to families. The state is the trustee for all of us in managing our public waters. When the legislature and Governor put the wants of special interests ahead of the needs of the rest of us, especially the rights of future generations, citizens have the responsibility to step in and look to the courts."

The public has long depended on our state government to balance the uses of our limited water resources. Yet, the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Justice continue to maintain they do not have the authority to take action to protect and defend the public's constitutional rights in our public waters.

Increasingly citizens have to take on the role of trustee for our public waters when the state fails to do so. There are few options left but to turn to the courts for a fair look at the responsibility, duty and authority of the state to protect, restore and sustain clean and abundant water for all Wisconsinites.

In October 2016, [Clean Wisconsin challenged nine high-capacity well applications approved by the DNR](#) on the basis of the negative impact well pumping would have on lakes, streams and other surface waters. The record brought forth in litigation shines light on how political forces in the DNR set aside the Department's own findings that the cumulative impact of high-capacity wells would negatively impact these waters protected by the Public Trust Doctrine in our state's Constitution, including high-quality trout streams.

In signing this bill, the Governor creates a law that puts families and communities at the back of the line for critical access to drinking water, recreational resources and economic opportunities.

Midwest Environmental Advocates is a public interest organization that uses the power of the law to support communities fighting for environmental accountability. Learn more about the Midwest Environmental Advocates on the web at midwestadvocates.org, like MEA on [Facebook](#) or follow @MidwestAdvocate on [Twitter](#).

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